

Minutes of the January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 Meeting of the Oconee Library Board of Trustees  
4:30 p.m. Watkinsville

Present: Robert Wyatt, Donna Butler, Mark Campbell, Deann Craft, Susan Curtis, Kimberly Lowman, Penny Mills, Rubielen Norris, Amy Perry, Susan Winstead, Lorena Gay-Griffin and Val Bell

Chairman Robert Wyatt determined that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 4:35. Robert asked for approval of the October minutes. Mark so moved. Kimberly seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Donna gave the Branch Manager's Report. She noted that Rhea had included in her report that Donna's first grandchild was born on November 16<sup>th</sup>. Donna explained that attendance is down in the Bogart Library because she has been unable to go out to visit schools. She drew our attention to several programs and presentations by staff members. She included in the packet of materials she provided us a copy of a letter from Jason L. Branch, Superintendent of Oconee County Schools, in which he strongly supported the nomination of the Athens Regional Library System for the 2017 Georgia Public Library of the Year Award. He specifically noted the many outreach and educational programs which the Bogart Branch provides.

Lorena began her Regional Library Report by also talking about the Georgia Public Library of the Year Award. She said it was really a regional award and noted that the many community partnerships in which the branches participate were instrumental in securing the award. Lorena went on to state that the ground-breaking ceremony for the Bogart Branch Expansion will be February 17<sup>th</sup>. She announced that a bus will take interested staff and board members to the capital on January 30<sup>th</sup>, Hot Dog Day, to lobby representatives on behalf of public libraries. Appointments with our representatives are being scheduled to maximize the use of time.

Turning to the budget, Lorena noted that, while we are half-way through the year, expenditures are below 50%. The book budget is only 30% spent. Bogart's new budget is due in April as the city is on a different fiscal year. Robert noted that money is building up in the gift account. Some of the "reserve" funds in the Equity account may go toward unexpected needs that occur with the Bogart Branch Expansion.

Discussion turned to the recent purchase of copiers for both the Bogart and Watkinsville Libraries. Mark moved that we approve the purchase of the copier that has already arrived in the Watkinsville Library and purchase another one in April. The money will come from the computer equipment fund. Susan Winstead seconded the motion. Rubielen inquired about a maintenance agreement for the printers. Val said there will be one, but she anticipates less costly maintenance with these new machines. The motion was approved unanimously. The \$200 designated for support of the Bogart copier, which appears on the budget statement Rhea prepared, may be for the paper used to print items for the Bogart Branch in the Watkinsville Branch, when the copier in Bogart died.

Lorena went on to point out that circulation statistics continue to climb. This is contrary to national trends. Audio books are very popular while computer use is down. MRR funds will be used to paint the Watkinsville Branch with the county paying half of the cost.

Donna gave the Friends of the Library report for Bogart. She explained that the store remains closed due to the City's planned streetscape project. The Friends, however, are considering a book sale. The Friends assisted library staff in hosting the Trunk or Treat and the Bookin It with Santa events.

Penny announced that the Watkinsville Branch Friends of the Library will mount the February book sale on February 8<sup>th</sup>. They are looking for new board members as they have had three resignations. Twelve members comprise the board.

Lorena announced that there will be branch library celebrations for the Georgia Library of the Year Award on February 5<sup>th</sup>. Cake will be provided. It is a good opportunity to invite commission and school board members to hear about the success of the Athens Regional Library System.

Under New Business Val announced that she has just received the second set of plans for the Bogart Library Expansion. She anticipates these will include some of the wish items that were discussed with Chad Smith and Milton Garland.

Val explained that the initial search for a new branch manager to fill the opening in the Watkinsville Branch was only advertised on a Georgia library job list. It resulted in a very small pool of applicants. A decision was made, in consultation with Robert, to advertise nationally. That search closes on January 31<sup>st</sup>. Robert will join Lorena and Val in the interviews which will take place in Athens with stops in Watkinsville and Bogart. There is no money designated to bring out-of-state applicants in for an interview. Rubielen moved that money needed to recruit and hire a new director come from the "Reserve" fund. Mark seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Robert announced that he has formed a special committee to begin exploring what is possible as the Board proceeds with plans for the Watkinsville Branch. He explained that the *Oconee Enterprise* on December 28<sup>th</sup> contained a report from the Board of Commissioners about expenditures of SPLOST funds in 2017. It appeared that money designated for the Watkinsville Branch was being spent on the Bogart Branch Expansion. The Bogart Branch Expansion money should have come from 2004 SPLOST funds. Robert has tried to reach John Daniell to see if this was the case. The 2015 SPLOST funds designated for the Watkinsville Branch should still be available.

Amy moved that the meeting adjourn. Kimberly seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:38.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Curtis

Approved 7/9/18

Minutes of the April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Meeting of the Oconee Library Board of Trustees  
4:30 p.m. Bogart Library  
Bogart, Georgia

Present: Robert Wyatt, Donna Butler, Mark Campbell, Deann Craft, Susan Curtis, Laura French, Cara Karnes, Penny Mills, Rubielen Norris, Susan Winstead, Lorena Gay-Griffin, and Val Bell

Guest: Mamie Fike

Chairman Robert Wyatt determined that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 4:30. Robert asked for approval of the January minutes. Mike so moved. Penny seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Robert introduced Cara Karnes, the new Branch Manager of the Watkinsville Library. Cara explained that she worked in the Gwinnet Public Library System for 13 years in both the Five Forks and Lawrenceville branches. She is delighted to have the opportunity to manage the Watkinsville Library.

Cara gave the Branch Manager report highlighting the groundbreaking ceremony in Bogart and celebration of the Library of the Year Award. She made special note of the extraordinary contributions Evelyn Knaft made during the transition between branch managers. Cara is pleased to find so many programs are offered in both branches. She noted that Rebecca Ballard was a keynote speaker at Georgia Share-a-Rama, the summer reading planning meeting, and that Donna Butler presented a paper at the Georgia Children's Literature Conference.

Lorena in her Regional Services Report spoke about the values statement adopted by the Athens Regional Library System. Val suggested the acronym **ICREW** to remind staff of the five value statements: **I**nclusive, **S**upportive of our **C**ommunity, **R**espectful, **C**ommitted to **E**xcellence, and **W**elcoming. Lorena also noted that in the budget proposal she is asking for 2% raises for staff and a 17 hour-a-week position in the Watkinsville Library.

Lorena asked Mamie Fike, the Library's business manager, to explain the budget in greater detail. Mamie noted that we are 75 % of the way through the current fiscal year. There were some savings in wages due to the vacancy incurred by the resignation of the previous branch manager as well as in the fact that not all employees take the Library's health insurance. The cost of painting the Watkinsville Branch was split, with state MRR funds absorbing half. Rubielen questioned why the Board was not asked about taking \$6,000 from reserves to cover the balance of the cost. Lorena recalled that she did consult Robert. Valerie suggested that a motion to approve the action be taken now. Penny so moved. Susan Winstead seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Robert asked about the large amount of funds sitting in the Gifts account. Penny said that the Watkinsville Friends group sent checks for \$30,000 and \$12,000 after their recent book sales. Val responded that she thought only \$20,000 was donated to the Gift account. She will look into the discrepancy.

Mark questioned the line for Oconee County Board of Commissioners SPLOST revenue. Mamie acknowledged that there was a typo on her draft and that the figure should read \$500,000 not \$50,000.

Robert turned to the issue of the Bogart Expansion funds, \$250,000 of which came from 2004 SPLOST funds. In talking with John Daniell, Robert learned that the commissioners think of the Oconee libraries as one entity. The Watkinsville Library 2015 SPLOST funds are still available, less \$250,000 used toward the Bogart Expansion and \$15,178 used toward emergency replacement of HVAC at the Watkinsville Branch.

Mark questioned whether MRR funds could have been used to replace the two HVAC units needed in the Watkinsville branch last summer. Val explained that, while she believes HVAC units would qualify for MRR funds, those resources were not available at the time the units failed. Replacing them was deemed an emergency and they were replaced expeditiously from operating funds. Penny commented that the Friends group was asked by the Board of Commissioners to pay for the replacement of a door in the Watkinsville Library.

Val turned to the topic of funding the Reimagine campaign. The Regional Library asked each branch's Friends group to contribute. While some of the poorer counties gave \$1,000 or more, the Watkinsville Friend's group gave only \$200. This meant that the less affluent communities were subsidizing the Oconee branches. Rubielen moved that \$2,000 be moved from the Watkinsville gift donation to the Reimagine campaign fund. Mark seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Mark expressed concern about the proposed budget requests. Discussion turned to how to explain the advantages of being part of a regional library system to the funding partners. Regional library personnel like IT technicians, accountants, and staff development officers enhance service. In addition, the PINES database, as well as other online resources are benefits that are shared with the individual branches which they could not afford on their own. Mamie said she would revise the proposed FY 2019 budget.

Val explained that approval of the Bogart expansion plan is delayed due to a vacancy in the ~~city~~ <sup>County</sup> Planning Department. Approval is being outsourced.

Lorena announced that the Watkinsville branch needs to replace another copier. Currently the patron copier is leased. This lease expires this month. She recommended the purchase of a new copier. After discussion, Mark moved that a new copier be purchased. Rubielen seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Robert reported that the Ad Hoc Committee he appointed to begin exploring how the 2015 SPLOST funds might be used has met twice. The members are Penny, Mike, Mark, Rubielen and himself. Each person spoke to different people about a possible location for a new library and related matters. While there is strong sentiment for keeping the library in Watkinsville, some officials cautioned the committee members not to get ahead of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the county. The need to begin building the case for a new facility with an emphasis on explaining what services cannot be offered with the existing facility is urgent. Lorena

mentioned that there are formulas using square feet per capita. Watkinsville is currently number 16 on the Georgia Public Libraries System list of public libraries in need of expansion.

Mark moved to adjourn. Mike seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:55.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Curtis

Minutes of the July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Meeting of the Oconee Library Board of Trustees  
4:30 p.m. Watkinsville Library  
Watkinsville, Georgia

Present: Donna Butler, Adam Cain, Mark Campbell, Deann Craft, Susan Curtis, Laura French (by speaker phone), Cara Karnes, Penny Mills, Rubielen Norris, Lorena Gay-Griffin, and Val Bell

Mark Campbell called the meeting to order at 4:37 p.m. He explained that Robert Wyatt was traveling. He asked for approval of the April 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. Penny noted that in the paragraph dealing with a vacancy in the Planning Department the unit was referred to as the City Planning Department. The vacancy was in the County Planning Department. With that revision, the minutes were moved for approval by Penny. Adam seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Cara described in her Branch Manager's report the significant increase in programming for the summer. She explained that outreach was conducted at the end of the school year to encourage participation in the summer reading program. The Family Fun Day, which was held in May, served as an excellent kickoff for the school age children's programming. She mentioned that the Bogart Library had to close for a day due to a water issue.

Lorena began the Regional Services Report by noting that all staff received a 2% raise. She encouraged library users to submit names of persons who might wish to assist with the Strategic Planning Initiative scheduled for the coming year. Lorena explained that the Bogart staff is doing some of their programming activities in the Ag Building. The Bogart Friends Book store is open 12 hours per week and offers a library book drop.

Val spoke about the Fund Equity or Reserve Fund. She is pleased to note that two months of operating expenses reside in the fund. She would like to see three months. She asked Penny to confirm that the Watkinsville Friends Group will put \$30,000 in the Gift Income Fund. Penny said that that was the group's intent after the September book sale. Val went on to observe that in the FY19 budget proposal the transfer from reserves will be just \$346.00. This means the library is moving toward a zero-based budget.

Mark asked if the library received the money it asked for from the Board of Commissioners, the City of Watkinsville, and the Board of Education. Val affirmed that it did. She said she will be making a presentation to the Board of Commissioners about the Bogart Expansion on August 7<sup>th</sup>.

Val concluded that the two initiatives for FY19 are strategic planning and collection development. For the former she anticipates hiring a consultant and beginning in January or February. With respect to collection development and maintenance she expects to develop new guidelines for selection, weeding and replacement.

Donna reported in the Bogart Friends Report that the group sponsors weekly Saturday book sales. They will host a "Books and Burgers" Fund Raiser on August 25<sup>th</sup>. She anticipates that the Bogart City Streetscape work will commence in January.

Penny explained in the Watkinsville Friends Report that the May Family Fun Day went better than ever. The group gave the Regional system \$2000 for the Reimagine campaign and \$1500 for the summer reading program. Members of the Friends group staff a booth at the Watkinsville Farmer's Market once a month where they sell books and hand out flyers about the September book sale.

Donna gave an update on the Bogart Library Expansion construction. The walls are up, the roof is on, and masonry work is underway. She has met with the interior design consultant. The tentative date for the grand opening is the end of 2018. Lorena added that Uncle Remus Library is interested in purchasing the old shelving. A rented air conditioning unit was installed in the library to replace one damaged by lightning.

Mark asked for approval of the FY19 budget. Adam moved for approval and Rubielen seconded. The budget was unanimously approved.

Cara announced that the Watkinsville Library was repainted in April. The job took less than two weeks.

Deann noted that Art Zimmerman, a former Board member, died recently. Cara said she had received a donation in his memory.

Penny noted that the god daughter of Leslie Maggiore gives the Friends Group \$250 each year in Leslie's memory. This year the money will be spent on children's literature.

Mark announced that the next meeting will be in November. Donna questioned why it would not be in October. Mark said he will check with Robert.

Penny moved to adjourn the meeting. Rubielen seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:05.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Curtis



Minutes of the October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Meeting of the Oconee Library Board of Trustees  
4:30 p.m. Bogart AG Building  
Bogart, Georgia

Present: Donna Butler, Adam Cain, Mark Campbell, Deann Craft, Susan Curtis, Laura French, Cara Karnes, Penny Mills, Rubielen Norris, Amy Perry, Susan Winstead, Robert Wyatt, and Val Bell

Robert Wyatt called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. He asked for approval of the July 9<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. He then mentioned that those minutes referenced a memorial fund in honor of Art Zimmerman. Cara explained that she has received about \$800 in Art's memory. Robert also noted that the minutes stated that the Board's next meeting would be in November, but this was a misunderstanding. Penny moved to approve the minutes. Adam seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Robert acknowledged that Lee Becker was present and filming the Board meeting.

Cara began her Branch Manager's Report by stating that the summer reading program was very successful. She went on to say that she, Donna and Val Bell presented a Bogart Library building update to the Board of Commissioners on August 7<sup>th</sup>. She is proud of the efforts of the Bogart Library staff and 15 volunteers who worked tirelessly to pack up and move the Bogart Library collection. Both the Bogart collection and the Watkinsville collection are being culled beginning in the adult fiction area. Cara has made outreach to the community a priority. She visited the Oconee Resource Council while Donna attended events at various schools. Cara facilitated a community focus group for the Board of Education as they began their strategic planning process. Cara explained that participants ranked their priorities for the Board of Education. Cara also announced that a patron donated a sophisticated telescope to the library. She hopes to build an astronomy reading program around this new resource. Lastly, Cara recounted how the county is waiting for the weather to become cooler before replacing the malfunctioning air conditioning units. One unit was leaking into the front storage room and has been turned off. It will cost \$37,000 to replace the units. The money is slated to come from the SPLOST fund.

Robert suggested that the Board should vote on the air conditioning units. Adam asked who is doing the work and if a crane would be required. Cara explained that the county is doing the work and, since the two units sit on the ground, no crane should be required. Adam moved that we approve the use of the SPLOST money to replace the air conditioning units. Susan Winstead seconded the motion. Amy asked how much SPLOST money would remain after this expenditure. Robert said that 1.7 million dollars would remain. The motion passed with one dissent.

Val began the Regional Report by stating that the budget looked good for this point in the year. A new courier van was purchased. While it is in use, it has yet to be painted with its identifying logo. Val went on to announce that two new staff members will begin October 15th. The first, Robin Faye, will be the new webmaster. Her priority is to redo the system's website.



The second hire is Jean Mead, who will be the Assistant Director for Regional Services and Outreach. Val is excited about the breadth of Jean's experience and organizational capabilities.

The Friends of the Bogart Library did not have a report. Penny gave a recap of the recent sale sponsored by the Friends of the Watkinsville Library. She said that they came within \$5.00 of the total sales made in last year's fall sale, while expenses were down. The gross amount earned was \$20,000. There were 300 fewer boxes of books put out, but since sales were on par with last year she believes the volunteers are doing a good job of culling donations to ensure a good array of titles. A volunteer reviews donations weekly for online sales which are posted on eBay and Amazon. He bundles Harlequin romances and similar material and is able to sell these titles this way. Penny commended the Civic Center staff, noting that they are excellent to work with.

Under old business Donna gave an update on the Bogart Library construction. The masonry is finished, the roof is going on, most of the interior framing is done and the windows are in. While construction is on schedule, due to the late start, the new building will probably open to staff in January. The hope is that it will be open to the public in February.

Under new business Penny explained that the Ad Hoc Committee on SPLOST 2015 met with John Daniell and Chuck Horton to discuss options for expansion of the Watkinsville Library. Under discussion was putting funds toward a multifunctional building or adopting a modular approach which would mean building additions as needed. Everyone agreed that the library needs to stay on the state's construction project list. The commissioners advised the committee members to work on their "elevator speech," which would summarize the need for expansion and highlight programs that cannot be undertaken in the existing facility due to space limitations. A public hearing on SPLOST 2021 will be held soon.

Robert cautioned that the amount of money available will be contingent on sales tax revenue. We may only get 80-90% of the 2 million dollars budgeted in SPLOST 15. Adam asked if land can be purchased ahead of time. Robert said yes. Rubielen explained that the commission is looking at various properties but discussions are restricted to executive session so that land prices do not escalate.

Penny moved to adjourn. Laura seconded the motion. The next meeting will be Monday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 in the Watkinsville Library. The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Curtis